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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9101  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 7597  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4965  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1106  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2472

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SENSITIVE  
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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [TH](#)  
SUBJECT: THAILAND COMMITS TO PARTICIPATE IN ASIA PACIFIC  
DEMOCRACY PARTNERSHIP (APDP) SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

REF: A. BANGKOK 03058  
[1](#)B. STATE 107528

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[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: On October 13 DRL Senior Advisor Christopher N. Camponovo and poloff met with Thai MFA International Organizations Deputy Director-General Ittiporn Boonpracong and Social Division Director Nadhavathna Krishnamra to discuss Thai participation in the Asia-Pacific Democracy Partnership (APDP). Ittiporn informed us that the RTG will participate in the upcoming Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in Seoul, but indicated that the level of their representation remains under consideration. The RTG prefers the group remain informal in nature so that members can participate in accordance with individual comfort levels, particularly as regards to inclusion of civil society components from member states. The RTG point of contact will continue to be the MFA Department of International Organizations. Camponovo also met with ANFREL, a Thai election monitoring NGO, to discuss its participation in APDP activities.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Comment: Ittiporn's comments may reflect, at least in part, the RTG's discomfort with engaging other countries on the question of democracy given the current internal strife in Thailand. The RTG appears likely to want to maintain control over how and what components of Thai civil society participate. End Comment.

COMMITTED TO MOVING FORWARD, BUT CONCERNED ABOUT THE STRUCTURE  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) After Camponovo briefly reviewed the history of the APDP initiative and thanked the RTG for their previous participation, Ittiporn reported that the MFA had received a copy of the APDP Chairman's Summary and noted that the RTG DCM in Beijing had provided a positive evaluation of the June 2008 APDP Mongolian election observation mission. Ittiporn stated that the RTG will continue to participate in the APDP and believes that the partnership has the potential to strengthen democracy in the region. Nonetheless, the RTG level of participation is still under consideration. Camponovo thanked Ittiporn for this decision, emphasizing that nearly all other participants, including the recently-committed Indonesians, will be sending representatives at the Deputy DG level or higher. Camponovo urged the MFA to resolve this question and inform ROK APDP interlocutors of their decision as soon as possible.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Camponovo further stressed that all participating nations are still observers in the APDP process and that participation in the APDP SOM does not imply formal

membership. Ittiporn responded that the RTG would like to see the process evolve and highlighted the current informal and flexible character of the APDP. Ittiporn repeatedly cautioned us that Thailand preferred a gradual and pragmatic approach to allow for individual member countries to grow comfortable with the process. Camponovo replied that comfort among participant states can best be built via non-controversial, practical activities that show results on the ground--activities such as election observation. Ittiporn responded positively to this comment and noted that technical cooperation and assistance foster capacity-building and allow for the development of shared values.

¶5. (SBU) Ittiporn raised the question of the role of civil society groups in the APDP. He argued that the APDP process must show respect for participant nations' levels of comfort regarding the inclusion of NGOs and other societal groups. Ittiporn returned to this issue multiple times, emphasizing that the governments involved must be allowed to make decisions with which they are comfortable; the RTG thus preferred that the APDP framework remain informal at this time.

¶6. (SBU) Ittiporn further noted that, as expressed in the Chairman's Statement, it was important that duplication of efforts be avoided. Camponovo agreed and pointed out that Indonesia's participation in the SOM will ensure there is no overlap with the work of the Bali Democracy Forum, the other major democracy initiative in the region. The meeting ended cordially with Camponovo expressing our gratitude for the RTG's agreement to participate in the SOM and welcoming of future RTG proposals regarding the way forward.

BANGKOK 00003099 002 OF 002

#### ANFREL - THAI NGO PERSPECTIVE

¶7. (SBU) Camponovo and poloff also met with Somsri Hananuntasuk and Sakool Zuesongdham, executive director and board member of the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), an NGO that sponsors election-monitoring missions in the region, to discuss their activities in the context of the APDP. The ANFREL representatives were pleased to share reports on their recent election observation missions and their work with partner organizations. Somsri and Sakool provided an overview of their upcoming plans and the network of international NGOs that deal with elections in the region. The ANFREL representatives responded well to Camponovo's overview of the APDP agenda and indicated their interest in participating in future election missions and other efforts to build and foster democracy in the Asia-Pacific region.

ENTWISTLE